

Minutes

Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

Tuesday, 12 July 2011

Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic
Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Member Present: Councillors David Simmonds</p> <p>Officers Present: Gill Brice – Democratic Services</p>	
3.	<p>PETITION OBJECTING TO THE DECOMMISSIONING OF THE TRAVELLER EDUCATION TEAM</p> <p>Councillor Anita MacDonald, Ward Councillor sent an e-mail in support of the petitioners as she was unable to attend the meeting.</p> <p><i>Concerns and suggestions raised by the representative of the petitioners at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Noted that the responsibility for traveller education had been handed to schools.</i>• <i>Recognised that schools would only work with children attending their own school.</i>• <i>The Traveller Community was a marginalised community.</i>• <i>There was a major problem in the Traveller Community accessing education and non attendance at school. The Traveller Education Team supported the Traveller Community in this area.</i>• <i>The Traveller Education Team pushed to get those traveller children that were not attending school, into school, especially at secondary schools.</i>• <i>Concerns about the attitude of some school staff towards the parents from the travelling community when contacting schools.</i>• <i>These problems had increased since the Traveller Education Team had been decommissioned and now the parents had to contact schools direct.</i>• <i>The parents respected and were grateful for what the teachers did for traveller children.</i>• <i>There needed to be back up for parents to help them resolve any issues that might arise.</i>• <i>A relationship needed to be built with the Traveller Community to understand their ways and gain their trust.</i>	<p>Action By:</p> <p><i>Gill Brice</i></p>

- *The Traveller Community wanted to be treated fairly, as any other person would want to be.*
- *It would be helpful if there was one designated person for the Traveller Community to contact to help them with any issues that arose.*
- *The Impact Assessment stated that the loss of the team could have an adverse effect on the Traveller Community.*
- *There had already been a slight adverse effect since the Team had been decommissioned.*
- *The Bell Farm Christian Centre had seen an increase in the numbers attending the centre since the Traveller Education Team had been decommissioned.*
- *The Traveller Education Team knew the ways and customs and were trusted by the Traveller Community and had dealt with a number of issues on their behalf. .*
- *The Team provided direct learning opportunities for traveller children and had undertaken a lot of work with the Traveller Community.*
- *Health issues were higher in the Traveller Community than in any other ethnic community*
- *The centre was unable to cope with the numbers attending the centre for support.*
- *The centre worked hand in hand with 3 children's centres but children were not on their books after 5 years of age.*
- *There were a lot of issues that arose for the Traveller Community once their children started school.*
- *Recognised that the funding was not in place to re-instate the services but it would be useful for the Traveller Community to have a contact point.*

The Cabinet Member listened to the points made by the petitioners and advised that there was no funding to provide the service as schools had opted to provide the service themselves. It was anticipated that the combination the schools, youth centres and children's centres should add up to a good service being provided for all children in Hillingdon. The Cabinet Member stated that he would make arrangements to visit the centre and meet with some of the Traveller Community to discuss the problems and issues that they experienced in regards to Education. This would be useful in looking at a way forward.

It was suggested that the visit should be undertaken in September as the Traveller Community tended to be away for the whole of August.

Resolved – That the Cabinet Member visit the Bell Farm Christian Centre to meet with Traveller Families to discuss the issues they experience in regards to Education at a date and time to be arranged in September.

	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 p.m., closed at 7.25 p.m.
--	--

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Gill Brice on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.